

31. *PTERNISTES RUBRICOLLIS* (Latham).

Common Somáli Partridge, called by the natives *Digrin*. It runs like the red-legged bird, and is very hard to kill; but the flavour of its flesh is good, even better than that of any other game in the country, and repays one well for the trouble of shooting it.

32. *SCLEROPTERA GUTTURALIS* (Rüppell).

I shot this Partridge on the mountain, and could not hear of its existence anywhere else.

33. *SYPHEOTIDES HUMILIS*, Blyth, Journ. As. Soc. Beng. xxiv. p. 305.

A Floriken with yellow iris, called by the Somáli *Waradada*. When frightened, it flies off, uttering a loud cry like *ka-ki-rak*, *ka-ki-rak*. I found it here on the Plateau amongst low herbage and grass, but not so numerous as I subsequently did in Central Africa, south of the equator. The male is smaller than its mate, and has black feathers, which distinguish it, under the lower mandible.

34. *ÆDICNEMUS AFFINIS*, Rüppell. Somáli, *Kedinhitu*.

Irides light straw-yellow. In almost all particulars of habit it corresponds with the common Indian bird of the same size.

35. *CHENALOPEX ÆGYPTIACUS* (L.). Egyptian Goose. Somáli, *Etal-Jaz* ("who lives at wells").

I found these birds also on the lakes south of the equator.

36. *PHALACROCORAX LUGUBRIS*, Rüppell. (*Carbo melanogaster*, Cuv., Par. Mus.)

A common sea-bird, which I shot at Bunder Goree.

XXX. — *History of the Derbyan Mountain-Pheasant* (*Oreophasis derbianus*). By OSBERT SALVIN, M.A., F.Z.S.

THOUGH some years have elapsed since the discovery of this strange bird, little or no additional information has been given as regards its habits and economy. Having resided for several months in the neighbourhood of its only known locality, I shall offer no apology for entering somewhat at length upon the few facts that I have been able to pick up, relating both to the

specimens previously sent and also to those that I have recently been fortunate enough to obtain.

The first specimen of the *Oreophasis* ever obtained was shot by Don Joaquin Quiñones about the year 1848, when in search, in company with Mr. Wyld of Dueñas, of the large Pigeons (*Columba fasciata*), Quails (*Ortyx thoracicus*, &c.), and other game found in the forests of Calderas in the Volcan de Fuego in Guatemala. This bird was preserved by Mrs. Wyld, and sent as a present to the late Mr. Klée, of the house of Klée, Skinner & Co. of Guatemala, and by him forwarded to the late Earl of Derby. It is now, I believe, to be seen in the Liverpool Museum, and is the specimen from which the figure in Gray and Mitchell's 'Genera of Birds' was taken.

A specimen brought to England by Mr. Skinner in the year 1855 I have not been able to trace; I believe it arrived in bad condition. For the two skins obtained by the same gentleman in the following year Mr. Skinner was again indebted to Mr. Wyld, who employed a man of the name of José Ordoñez, a native of Dueñas (a hunter of deer and peccaries), to procure them. This man has since assured me that it was not until he visited the mountain for the third time that he succeeded in shooting them. The high price Mr. Wyld paid for these two birds, and the news of their great rarity in Europe, made the *Oreophasis* more sought after; and Mr. Rittecher, a resident in Guatemala, succeeded in obtaining two, which were, I believe, forwarded to Hamburg. Don Vicente Constancia, of Antigua Guatemala, also, now has in his collection an indifferent skin.

These seven examples are all that I can hear of as having been preserved hitherto.

During the six months I spent in Guatemala in 1858, I did not obtain specimens of the *Oreophasis*, though José Ordoñez was taken into consultation. My collections were made principally in the plains about Dueñas, and not in the Volcano. Last year (1859), while absent in Vera Paz, José Ordoñez brought one to the house at Dueñas; but no one being there to skin it, it was lost. On my return I again employed the same man, and the following morning had the satisfaction to see him walk into the yard with one tucked under his arm, and again on the suc-

ceeding day with one under each arm. The first of these was a male, the other two females,—the three skins which were exhibited by Mr. Selater at the Meeting of the Zoological Society on March 13, 1860. Being particularly desirous both of seeing the bird alive and of shooting it myself, and having the fruit taken from the crop of one of the above-mentioned birds, as a clue to indicate in what trees it would most likely be found, I set off for the mountain soon after this, with José Ordoñez for my guide. We started at six o'clock in the morning at break of day, reached the forest region at nine, and continued climbing until we had almost passed out of it into the region of Pines and coarse grass with which the peak is clothed, but no *Oreophasis* was met with. Descending again, we struck the barranco in which José had shot the specimens he brought me; but with no better success, except that I found unmistakeable "sign" in the shape of feathers, and the fruit of the tree I had been in search of. Though not successful, this expedition was satisfactory in one respect—I had seen a spot where the *Oreophasis* certainly had visited, and where my specimens had been killed. The truth of the latter fact I have no reason to doubt. From a habit one acquires of looking upon a Central American half-breed as a rascal till he has proved himself honest, I certainly did at first suspect that José was deceiving me, and that he had no idea of allowing me to poach upon his peculiar preserve of *Oreophases*. I regret that I cannot give any other than José's account of the habits of this bird; but as his stories bear a semblance of truth, I do not hesitate in transcribing them. In the early morning he told me he usually found them in the upper branches of the forest trees, searching for their favourite fruit, which they eat both ripe and unripe; as the day advances they descend to the underwood, where they remain all day, basking or scratching among the leaves. This is pretty much what a *Penelope* or a *Crax* does, both of which I have frequently had opportunities of observing in the forests of the low lands. The cry of the bird he could not describe satisfactorily.

As the Volcan de Fuego is at present the only known locality from which the *Oreophasis* has been obtained, I will here shortly describe its physical conformation. The north-

ernmost of the three peaks into which the whole mountain is divided, seems to be, geologically, the most ancient. When this attained its present elevation (nearly 14,000 feet above the level of the sea), the fires broke out on its southern side, raising another peak equal in height to the original one. Again a fresh crater has opened on the southern side of the second peak, more nearly at its base, heaping up the vast conical mass, from the point of which still issues a thin but constant curl of white smoke. This last is the true Volcan de Fuego, the "volcano of fire," though the term is applied to the whole group. All these three mountains are united up to a high elevation, the fire-peak being connected with the other two by a horizontal ridge, which probably indicates a third outbreak on the southern slope, of less magnitude, and antecedent to the existence of the present crater. All traces of craters have disappeared from the original peaks, they having been, doubtless, filled up by ashes from subsequent eruptions. The sides of these mountains, or rather mountain (as, except very near their summit, they are actually one), are cut from top to bottom by deep ravines or barrancos. The lower part of the base, to a height of some 2000 feet above the *llano* of Dueñas, has been cleared of its forests by the Indians for their fields of maize and *frijoles*; but these cleared lands have been since abandoned, and a thick brushwood has sprung up. The forest region commences at about 2000 feet above the plain, or about 7000 feet above the level of the sea. It extends upwards until its component trees become scattered Pines, which diminish in number as the elevation increases to the summit. The lower part of this forest region consists principally of evergreen Oaks; these in their turn give way, on ascending, to the Hand Plant (*Chirostemon platanoides*), the "Khanák" of the Indians, with here and there a patch of Alder. These trees again are succeeded by Pines and coarse grass in the northernmost peaks, and by loose ashes and rocky precipices in the fire-peak. A tree called the "Palo careta," the "Khakhachay" of the Kachiquel Indians, grows between the line of junction of the Oaks and Khanak, the fruit of which is sought by the *Oreophasis*. It is a fine forest-tree, and usually grows in or near the bottoms of the ravines. It is, however, by no means common. Its fruit is about the size of

a walnut, has a purple skin when ripe, and a large stone in the centre: it is ripe in January*. This forest is evidently the home of the *Oreophasis*, as the *Cracidae* (and to this family the present bird undoubtedly belongs) are a family of forest-loving birds, any member of which would feel strangely out of its element in one of those open sunny savannas in which artists delight to place them.

In 'The Ibis,' 1859, p.224, I stated that there was good reason to suppose that the examples of *Oreophasis* procured by Mr. Skinner were obtained from the Volcan de Agua. This I find was not the case, as they were shot nearly in the same spot in the Volcan de Fuego as my specimens. Strange as it may seem, the Volcan de Fuego is the sole locality which has produced this bird. I made every inquiry for it in Vera Paz, where the forests of the mountain-tops somewhat resemble those of the volcanos, but could hear nothing of it; nor is it even known to the charcoal-burners of the Volcan de Agua. Though its non-occurrence in localities which might be supposed favourable to its existence rests on negative evidence, yet it is certain that, whereas to the Indians frequenting the Volcan de Fuego the bird is well known, nowhere else can its existence be traced, not even in the Volcan de Agua. From all I could hear, and from having made three or four fruitless expeditions in search of it, I am led to conclude that it is rare even in the single mountain where it is found. This supposition is borne out by Mr. Wyld, who has frequently inquired of the Indians of San Pedro Ipocapa and Acatenango (villages on the southern and western sides of the volcano), but could hear nothing of it.

The *Oreophasis* is known to the Indians frequenting the mountain as the "Khannanay," and to the Ladinos or half-bred Indians as the "Faisan."

The female of *O. derbyanus* was until lately unknown to science. Owing, I am inclined to think, to the absence of positive information on the subject, she has been supposed to bear plumage different from the male (as is the case in *Crax*

* Specimens of the branches and fruit of this tree have been submitted to Dr. Hooker, who has kindly identified it as a *Prunus*, closely allied to, if not the same as, *Prunus occidentalis* of the West Indies.

globoicera), and probably to want the standing bony crest which forms so marked a feature in this species. From the three birds brought to me by José Ordoñez, I am able to state that the female differs in no way from the male except in being rather smaller in size, and in having the crest on the head rather shorter and more tapering. All three specimens were adult, and the ovary of the females very plainly developed. Of the sex of the male, too, I can speak with equal certainty. Comparing the sternum with that of *Penelope purpurascens*, a very marked affinity is observable. The cranial protuberance is attached to the skull. It is hollow, the cavity being filled with a cellular tissue, as in the bill of a Toucan (*Ramphastos*). The enclosing bone is extremely fragile, and in the females may easily be crushed between the finger and thumb. The crest is deep vermilion in colour, also the legs and toes. The bill is a very pale straw colour, and the iris white. The male, the day after it was killed, weighed 5 lbs.

11 Hanover Terrace, Regent's Park,
May 25th, 1860.

XXXI.—*Recollections of the Swans and Geese of Hudson's Bay.*

By GEORGE BARNSTON, of the Hudson's Bay Company's Service.

SWANS, except in a few particular localities, are scarce, rather than plentiful birds on the shores of Hudson's Bay. They are seen at the same time as the other migratory birds, winging their way to the secluded recesses of the North, resting throughout the interior, and losing units of their number here and there by the Indian's gun. In the scarcity of their favourite food (the roots of the *Sagittaria sagittifolia*), they have recourse to those of *Equiseta*, and the tender underground runners of some grasses of the northern latitudes. They sometimes breed in the interior before arriving at the coast. I had two eggs brought to me from a nest on the banks of a lake near Norway House; but I cannot say whether these were of the *Cygnus americanus* or *C. buccinator*. Towards Eastmain Fort, in James's Bay, a considerable number of Swans hatch; and a few are killed